

Native American languages, and to encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions;

“(3) encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support—

“(A) Native American language survival,

“(B) educational opportunity,

“(C) increased student success and performance,

“(D) increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and

“(E) increased student and community pride;

“(4) encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educators, Indian tribes, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;

“(5) recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;

“(6) fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;

“(7) support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and

“(8) encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary and higher education, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.”

Over the last 30 years, catalyzed by the Native American Languages Act, Congress has promoted the maintenance and revitalization of Native languages. In 1992, Congress amended the act to establish a grant program at the Administration for Native Americans, ANA, to support Native language projects.

During my time in Congress, I have worked to support Native American languages revitalization efforts. In 2006, as a U.S. Congressman for New Mexico, I helped lead a bipartisan bill to expand the ANA's grant program to bolster Native language immersion education programs. I also participated in an Education and Workforce Committee field hearing in my home State to hear from Native language advocates, which solidified support for the bill's passage in the House. Enacted as the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act, this legislation was named after an Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo traditional storyteller and Tewa language advocate who tragically passed away in 2006.

As the current vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I had the honor of leading the most recent Esther Martinez Native American

Languages Programs Reauthorization Act, which was signed into law this past December, to further enhance ANA's Native languages grant programs.

I also convened a Native American Languages Listening Session last year and worked with Committee Chairman JOHN HOEVEN to hold an oversight hearing in 2018 to hear directly from Native language revitalization stakeholders across the country. At those events, we learned that, over the last three decades, great strides have been made to rectify past injustices and move toward support of Native languages. Sadly, despite our efforts, a number of Native languages are still endangered today. The loss of even one Native language would deal a significant blow to our shared American and global heritage. There is still more work to do.

This anniversary is an important opportunity for Congress to reflect. I hope my colleagues will join me and recommit to fully upholding the policies set out in the Native American Languages Act.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SUSANNA POST

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding Arkansas educator, Susanna Post, who was named the 2021 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

Susanna has demonstrated her excellence in educating during her tenure as a math and business technology teacher at Belle Point Alternative Center in Fort Smith, AR.

Susanna launched her teaching career in North Carolina after graduating from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 2002, where she earned a degree in mathematics and computer science. She left the classroom temporarily after a family relocation when she entered the business world and worked as petroleum analyst and senior engineering technician at multiple oil and gas companies.

We are fortunate that she wanted to return to teaching as she has been a trailblazer during her time at Belle Point, quickly accruing a long list of achievements. Susanna developed the school's first coding club and also facilitated a Lindamood-Bell literary intervention group. She is also the primary leader for the school's Culture Project Week, a program that uses project-based activities to strengthen relationships among students, faculty, and community. Her devotion to educating future generations has benefited not only Belle Point, but the entire school district. In addition to serving on the district's secondary math curriculum development team, she also created an ACT prep program in collaboration with other district leaders. Susanna's leadership is equally evident in the classroom, where she imple-

mented a unique project-based learning approach using her experience from the business world.

Her passion for and commitment to education is demonstrated by her own education. She completed two master's programs while teaching at Belle Point. In 2017, she earned a master's degree in secondary education and teaching from the University of Central Arkansas. In 2020, she received a master's in rural and urban school leadership from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Susanna Post for her determination, devotion, and commitment to her students and to education. I am encouraged by her efforts to inspire our next generation of leaders and her drive to help them succeed.●

REMEMBERING SEAN HIGGINS

• Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I rise to recognize a lifelong Nevadan and a friend to all he knew, Sean Higgins.

Sean was a dedicated member of our community, an unmistakable presence, and a tireless champion and advocate for our gaming industry and small businesses in Nevada. He was born in Chicago in 1964, but raised in Las Vegas, 1 of 10 siblings—5 brothers and 5 sisters. His father, Dr. Gerald Higgins, was an orthopedic surgeon and doctor for the Rebels, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas football team. Sean graduated from Bishop Gorman High School. He left Nevada only briefly for his education, obtaining a degree in business administration from Southern Methodist University and a law degree from Santa Clara University School of Law.

Sean and I grew up in Las Vegas when it was a much smaller town of 330,000 people, so perhaps our paths were always destined to cross. We met in the 6th grade when we attended Matt Kelly Elementary School together. Even then, Sean had a presence, with his distinctive voice and outgoing personality. He was friendly, charming—yes, even at 11 years old—and made you want to hang out with him. And so we did, spending time at pool parties and dancing to the band “Hot Chocolate.” Over the years our paths diverged, but his focus, like mine, was on returning to Las Vegas and the State we loved to practice law.

Sean represented clients both large and small to State gaming regulators and government bodies across the Silver State. Everyone knew Sean for his gregarious nature and his booming voice, which made him a fierce advocate for championing the causes of his clients. He spent 17 years as general counsel of Herbst Gaming, a multi-jurisdictional casino operator in Nevada that became Affinity Gaming in 2011, and where his sister, Mary Beth Higgins, now serves as CEO. He served as executive-vice president of government affairs for Golden Entertainment,